

Failing To Plan (Planning To Fail)

Pining - I

endversed

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Summary:

The Losers, sans Richie and Eddie, come up with a plan to get the two idiots together.

Failing To Plan (Planning To Fail)

“We’ve g-gotta do something about Richie and Eddie.”

Bill stands before the Losers, sans the pining idiots, as they huddle together conspiringly in his living room one Saturday morning. Mike is cross-legged on the floor, leaning back on his arms with his elbows flat against the carpeted floor. Stan is ram-rod straight as he sits in the armchair, fingers tapping against his knee. Beverly and Ben take up the sofa, her lounging back against the armrest with her feet in his lap, him with the sappiest smile on his face as he pretends he’s not chancing adoring glances at her at every opportunity.

One pining couple a time, Bill thinks.

“Agreed,” Bev declares, flexing her socked toes. “This has gone on long e-fucking-nough.”

“You’re telling me,” Stan scoffs, rolling his eyes. “None of *you* have to endure Richie’s lamentations that Eddie will never love him back. *Oh, Stan, he’s so gorgeous, and adorable, he can do a thousand times better than me, what’s the point of even trying.*” Stan’s Richie impression is pretty dead-on, so Bill leans forward to give him a high five, which Stan accepts with a shrug. “I’ve had to re-assure that moron that he is good enough for Eddie at least five times a day since we were *fifteen*. Three years of that shit is enough to send a better man than I over the brink.”

“You know I-I’ve had the same from Eddie, Stan,” Bill reminds him. “*Why is he f-flirting with Jessica, Bill? Why did he put his a-arm around her in the cafeteria? He always puts his arm around me in the c-c-cafeteria, Bill!*”

Bill and Stan shake their heads sadly at each other, knowing the other’s pain all too well.

“He doesn’t use Eddie’s name around me, but don’t think that means I get off scot-free,” Bev interjects, swivelling her feet out of Ben’s lap to put them on the floor. Everyone but her notices the mildly devastated look that flashes across Ben’s face when she does, despite

how quickly he hides it. "Every single fucking time we get high together, he rambles about this 'person' who's his 'soulmate'. High Richie thinks he's being so slick by avoiding proper nouns, but he gives himself away when he starts tearing up over how tiny and cute this 'person' is."

"So what can we do?" Mike asks, looking between each one of them. "I mean – I met you guys when we were fourteen, and even *then* they were clearly love-sick over each other. Even if neither of them had actually realised it yet."

"We can't force them," Ben says quietly, mouth twisting slightly. "I'm sure that when they're ready, they'll sort things out. Maybe they're both just... just scared, of messing up a friendship? Besides – they've applied to a lot of the same colleges, so it's very unlikely they'll actually be split up after high school. I'm sure they'll – they'll get together in their own time."

Bill, Mike, and Stan share a look – he's not talking about Richie and Eddie, not really.

"Th-they're morons," Bill proclaims, bringing the conversation back to the idiots at hand. The others nod along with him slightly in agreement. "And we've g-given them three fucking years to get their a-acts together."

"No more," Stan mutters darkly, eyes closed as he shakes his head. "I just can't take it anymore. Bill – I'm in. Whatever the plan, I am fucking in."

"Me, too," Mike concurs.

"Me, three," Bev offers, turning expectantly to Ben afterwards. "Ben? Please?"

Ben chews his lip for a second, looking nervous. They all know he's never been one to get involved in other people's lives without them specifically and emphatically asking, so joining in on a plan like this is sure to be making him feel all sorts of uncomfortable.

Bill and the others would feel bad, if it weren't truly for the greater

good of all of their sanities.

“Okay,” Ben agrees eventually. Bev grins, clapping her hands together and leaning over to press a kiss to his cheek. He goes bright red at the contact and everyone kindly pretends not to notice. “But if they get angry at us for meddling...”

“I’ll t-take all of the blame,” Bill finishes. “Don’t worry.”

“Aw, Bill,” Bev coos, smirking at him. “You’re the best leader a bunch of losers like us could ever ask for.”

“You’ve not heard his plan yet,” Mike hedges.

They all turn to Bill, eyebrows raised in anticipation.

“O-okay, so...”

The plan is simple and will, hopefully, be effective: get Richie and Eddie to the quarry, where a picnic will already be laid out for them, and then steal Richie’s car keys and Eddie’s bike and refuse to give either back until they’ve sorted their shit together.

“I was kinda expecting more,” Mike admits after Bill lays it all out.

“Anyone got a-any better ideas?” Bill asks, looking out at them all to find only a sea of shrugs and shaking heads. “E-exactly. So we’re going with this option.”

They all murmur their acquiescence before Bev stands up and claps her hands together once.

“Let’s get this show on the road then, boys!” she announces, turning to each of them as she dishes out their roles. “Mike, you’re in charge of getting the picnic stuff – blankets, food, drinks. Nothing alcoholic, you know Eddie can turn into a rude little shit when he’s had a

drink.”

“Turn into?” Stan deadpans, eyebrows raised at her.

“Okay, fine – *more* of a rude little shit than usual,” she concedes.

“Bill, Stan, you guys find Eddie. Ben and I will find Richie. We all meet at the quarry in an hour. Capiche?”

“Capiche,” the boys say in unison.

“Are either of them allergic to anything?” Mike asks as they all gather their belongings to get going.

“According to Eddie’s mother, yes,” Stan starts.

“In a-actuality, no,” Bill finishes.

“Richie hates shellfish, though,” Ben says.

Bev gives him a weird look. “This is a picnic, Benjamin, not dinner at the Ritz. Nobody’s getting any shellfish.”

Ben shrugs. “Better safe than sorry, right?”

“Right,” Mike agrees, patting his shoulder and smiling kindly at him. “No shellfish, got it.”

They all go about their duties after splitting from Bill’s house.

Mike hauls ass to the local grocery store to pick up some sodas and assorted sandwiches, heading back to the farm afterwards to grab the blankets from his living room.

Bill and Stan try Eddie’s house first, only to be met at the front door by a condescending Mrs Kasprak who informs them that her delightful son is at the library studying. They go the library next to confirm what they’d already figured – Eddie’s getting better at lying to his mom, because he’s nowhere in sight. They try the pharmacy after, asking Mr Keane if he’s seen Eddie that day, but Mr Keane tells them he’s not seen the boy since Tuesday.

Bev and Ben go straight to Richie’s house, ringing the doorbell

incessantly to no answer. This doesn't necessarily mean that Richie's not home, as quite often he'll have his music turned up so loud he can't hear the dinging of his visitors, so they go through the permanently unlocked backdoor and search the house, but find no-one in. They try the arcade, the comic book store, even the fucking church (because you just never know with Rich, he's a real life enigma) but don't catch sight of him once.

When they try the Aladdin, they find that it's Bill and Stan's last resort too.

"Any luck?" Ben asks, but Bill and Stan both shake their heads.

"Nope," Bill answers, mouth twisting in mild vexation. "You?"

"Nah," Bev admits as Ben returns their head shake. "We tried all the usual haunts. Boy's in hiding, I swear."

"Eddie, too," Stan says, head swivelling to the streets around them, like he might conjure the idiots up by sheer force of irritated will alone. "He told his mom he was at the library but he wasn't, so he's obviously doing something he doesn't want her to know about."

Bill snorts. "Sh-she doesn't want him doing anything, so that doesn't narrow it down much."

"Look, let's just go to the quarry," Ben decides, looking down at his watch and noticing they've already lost forty minutes looking for them both. "We'll text them it's an emergency and they've got to meet us there, and we'll just blindside them when they show up."

Bev laughs, elbowing Ben in the ribs. "Look who's becoming more Machiavellian than all of us."

"I am not," Ben protests, blushing.

"You so are," she counters, smiling fondly at him. "And I'm absolutely digging it." Ben blushes even harder when she plants a quick kiss on his cheek. "Now, boys! Ben, you text Mike to update him on the plan, Bill, you text Eddie, and I'll text dear ol' Trashmouth."

“Wh-what shall I write?”

They collectively decide on: **meet @ quarry asap. emergency. will explain when you get here.**

“That outta do it,” Bev proclaims proudly once each text has been sent to its intended recipient.

“We all know Richie isn’t the person to text in an emergency,” Stan doubts. “There’s a pretty good chance that he won’t see the text, and that he won’t show up at all, and that he’ll just reply tomorrow with his usual *haha sorry didn’t see that, you good?*”

“Staniel, that is a risk we must take,” Bev says, nodding sagely at him. “And your Richie impression is scarily good, man, bravo.”

“Mike’s on his way there now,” Ben cuts in, looking down at his phone. “He’s asking if we want him to pick us up on his way?”

“W-well I’m not walking,” Bill replies.

Ben taps out an affirmative response.

“Do we really think this is going to work?” Stan asks, looking dubious.

Bev shrugs. “I dunno, but it’s worth a shot at least, right?”

“Definitely,” Bill agrees. “If I have to h-hear Eddie talk about Richie’s curls one more fucking time, I’ll be f-f-forced to commit murder.”

“What makes you think it’ll stop if they get together?” Ben queries. “What if they just get worse?”

They all exchange panicked looks.

“Is it too late to call the whole thing off?” Stan says after a moment of anxious silence.

“I think, unfortunately, yes,” Bev offers, pointing her finger to the crossroads next to them. “Mike’s here.”

Mike's truck comes barrelling around the corner, provisions stacked high on his passenger seat. He pulls to a stop in front of them and they all clamber in, fitting where they can, more squished together than they'd truly like to be.

But – all for the greater good, right?

“Have either of them replied?” Mike asks as they set on their way.

“N-nothing from Eddie,” Bill states.

“Radio silence from Trashmouth, too,” Bev admits.

Stan rolls his eyes. “Shocker.”

“I'm sure it'll be fine,” Mike says. “Gives us time to get everything set-up, doesn't it?”

They all hum in agreement as the truck carries them towards their destination and towards Richie and Eddie's inevitable fate.

When they arrive at the quarry fifteen minutes later, they're shocked to see Richie's car parked up by the trees, almost shrouded entirely by the shrubbery.

“The fucker's already h-here!” Bill exclaims as the truck pulls to a stop. “Do you th-think he got Bev's message a-and just didn't respond?”

Bev shakes her head. “Nuh uh,” she disagrees, squinting at the car parked a hundred yards or so in front of them. “Look how foggy the windows are – he's hot-boxing.” She pouts as they all climb out of Mike's truck. “Asshole didn't fucking invite me, I'm offended!”

“You can chew him out for that later, Beverly,” Stan says, rolling his eyes. All the Losers, privately from Stan, collectively agree that, one

day, he will roll his eyes so hard they pop right out of their sockets. "Let's just go get him, and then we can focus on Eddie, alright?"

They all nod in agreement, walking the distance from Mike's truck to Richie's car.

Whilst Mike's truck isn't brand new by any stretch of the imagination, he keeps it clean, inside and out, and looks after it well. Despite the fact that Mike uses it sometimes to ferry livestock around, it never smells or shows any lingering signs of such an activity. None of the Losers have any problem at all getting into Mike's truck.

Richie's, conversely, is a rusted heap of shit with dents and scratches covering pretty much every part of it. The inside is cluttered with fast food wrappers and empty cigarette cartons, and the outside doesn't look like it's been washed since it was first built nearly twenty years ago. *All* of the Losers have a problem getting into Richie's car – Eddie, especially.

"I can't see him in the front," Ben announces when they're a little closer.

"He sits in the back when he smokes," Bev explains. "Says it's easier to lounge and 'chillax' back there. Just open the door; hopefully he'll be high enough by now that it'll be easy to get the keys off him."

"I'll do it," Mike offers, already leading in front of them.

The all crowd around the backdoor as Mike stretches his hand out, curling his fingers around the corroded handle and pulling it open abruptly.

He, and all of the others, immediately wish he hadn't.

"Oh my *God*."

"What the fuck!"

"H-holy *shit*."

"Are you assholes freaking *kidding me*."

“Get *some*, Tozier, woo!”

That last exclamation comes from Bev.

Mike shuts the door just as quickly as he opened it, jumping back from the vehicle like it’s about to explode. They all share looks of equal, absolute horror – all except Beverly, who is cackling so hard she’s doubled over from it.

“Was that...” comes from Ben.

“Richie,” Bill whispers.

“With his hands down...” comes from Mike.

“Eddie’s shorts,” Stan states, eyes wide like he has *seen some shit*.
“And his tongue down Eddie’s throat.”

“I th-think Eddie’s tongue was doing the s-same thing,” Bill mumbles.

“Hell yeah it was!” Bev shouts, still struggling for breath after her laughing fit. “I can’t believe –“

She cuts herself off to fall into another round of giggles while the rest of them watch in abstract terror as the door to Richie’s car opens again.

“Afternoon, fuckers,” Richie greets, exiting the car with absolutely zero grace. He’s still shirtless, his top tucked into the front pocket of his un-buttoned jeans. His hair is even wilder than usual, his glasses sitting haphazard on the bridge of his nose, and there’s a shameless grin on his flushed face. “Didn’t expect to see you assholes here.”

“Clearly,” Stan deadpans.

“What the fuck i-is going on, Richie?” Bill demands.

“Well,” Richie starts. “Me and Eds decided to go on a drive today. Y’know, take in the scenery, get up close and personal with nature, all that kinda shit.”

“Up close and personal with nature?” Mike questions, eyebrow

raised. "What, was nature hiding down Eddie's shorts?"

Richie smirks. "What lies inside Eddie's shorts is as beautiful to behold as the most perfect sunset you've ever seen, Micyle, I'll give you that."

"Beep fucking beep, Richie!" Eddie yells as he joins them outside. He, at least, has bothered to put his sweater back on and has re-adjusted his shorts. His face is even redder than Richie's and there's a pretty angry looking hickey seemingly freshly sucked on his neck. "There's plenty of places to hide a body around here, dickwad, don't make me sum up my options."

"What the *fuck* is going o-on, Eddie?" Bill repeats, re-directing his question this time.

"I just told ya, Big Bill! Me and Eds were –"

"We saw *perfectly* clear what you were doing, Trashmouth," Bev cackles.

She holds her hand up to Richie in a high five, but as he reaches to gladly reciprocate, Ben pulls her arm back down.

"Bev, you *saw* where his hands have just been," Ben warns her.

"Hey!" Eddie shouts, sounding acutely offended. "What the hell are you implying, Ben?"

"Yeah, Ben!" Richie joins in, wrapping an arm around Eddie's shoulder. Eddie scowls up at him instantly but doesn't budge from his grasp one inch. "Ol' Eddie Spaghetti here's got the cleanest dick I've ever laid hands on."

"That's not saying much, seeing as the only other one you've ever touched is your own," Stan says.

"Point," Richie concedes, nodding amiably.

"C-can one of you dipshits actually e-explain what the fuck is going on?" Bill insists, looking between Richie and Eddie in front of him. "When the fuck d-did this happen?"

“*How* the fuck did this happen?” Mike adds on.

Richie smiles, blindingly bright. “Do you want to tell them, or shall I, sugar dumpling?”

“I told you not to fucking call me that,” Eddie chastises, but he doesn’t move away from Richie, choosing to instead wind an arm around Richie’s waist and pull him closer. “Like two months ago, I think?”

“Two *months*?” Ben exclaims, mouth gaping.

“How the fuck have you two morons managed to keep this a secret for *two months*?” Bev says incredulously. “You two are the *worst* at keeping secrets!”

“Clearly fucking not,” Eddie snarks, scowling at her. “It just – it just kinda happened, I guess.”

“It didn’t just *happen*, Spaghetti Man,” Richie corrects, shaking his head at Eddie as if to say *this putz, am I right?* “I climbed through his window one night like the fucking romantic hero that I am and declared my undying love to him. Eds here was so overcome with joy that he leapt straight into my arms and onto my di–“

“That’s absolutely not what fucking happened,” Eddie interrupts, scowling even harder. “Yes, you did climb through my window one night, and yes, you did declare your undying love for me. But you were drunk out of your mind and you were crying into my comforter because – how did you put it? Because *I love you so much it hurts, Eds baby.*”

“Your Richie impression’s not as good as mine,” Stan decides.

“So you got together that night?” Mike asks.

“No, the morning after,” Eddie clarifies. “After Richie spent a good hour puking up his guts and pretending he didn’t remember a thing he said, I gently reminded him.”

“He yelled at me for not doing it three years ago,” Richie explains proudly, grinning down at Eddie. “And then shoved a toothbrush into

my hands so that – how did you put it, Eds? So that *I can kiss the crap out of your trash mouth, Tozier.*”

“That sounded nothing like Eddie,” Bev points out.

“Why d-didn’t you tell us?” Bill asks.

There’s hurt clear on his expression and in his tone of voice. Eddie’s frown softens as he realises.

“I’m sorry, Big Bill,” Eddie says genuinely. “I just –“

“It was my idea,” Richie announces, cutting Eddie off. “I asked that we keep it a secret.”

Eddie rolls his eyes. “Quit trying to take all the heat, Richie. It was me. I didn’t want to tell anyone.” He pauses, biting his lip. Richie’s hand migrates from Eddie’s shoulder to his neck, pulling him in a bit to kiss the crown of his head. “I was scared, guys. I didn’t want my mom to find out and try to forbid me from seeing Richie. I mean, I know she’s not had much luck in the past, and she’s been trying since we were in elementary school, but I think finding out he’s more than just a friend might make her more aggressive in her attempts. And – and I guess I was scared about how you’d all react, too.”

It goes quiet for a moment as they all watch Richie’s hand moving again to begin carding its way through Eddie’s hair. Eddie’s eyes flutter closed at the gesture, and Richie isn’t looking anywhere but concernedly down at Eddie.

“Who wants to tell him why we’re here in the first place?” Ben asks.

Eddie’s eyes open again and Richie looks over, confusion apparent on his face.

“We c-came up with a plan,” Bill starts.

“A plan to get you idiots together,” Bev continues.

“Because we were sick and tired of seeing you pine over each other,” Stan finishes.

Richie and Eddie blink in dumb-founded unison.

“Really?” Eddie breathes after a few seconds.

Mike nods. “Really.”

“What was the plan?” Richie asks.

“To force you two to talk,” Ben answers, growing red again as he continues. “*Not* to find you two in – in –”

“In flagrante,” Bev supplies, giggling again and waggling her eyebrows.

“So you,” Eddie mumbles, using the hand closest to Richie to begin fiddling with the hem of his own sweater. Richie immediately removes his hand from Eddie’s hair and uses it to twine their fingers together, interlocked hands swaying slightly between them. It seems to give Eddie the courage he needs, as he continues on louder, more sure of himself. “So you don’t mind?”

“Of course we d-don’t mind!” Bill declares instantly.

“Yeah, guys,” Mike agrees, smiling kindly. “We’re happy for you.”

“Who says you’re speaking for all of us?” Stan teases, but he’s smiling at them too.

“I’m glad you two finally got here,” Ben says, still a little red. “I mean, I wish we’d found out a little differently...”

“I don’t,” Bev announces, bouncing forwards to kiss Eddie’s forehead and Richie’s cheek. “That was the funniest shit that has ever happened to me.”

“That was the most *humiliating* thing that’s ever happened to me,” Eddie confesses, ears tinged red.

“Because you got caught in the act?” Stan asks. “Or because you got caught in the act with fucking Trashmouth, of all people?”

“Damn it, Stanley, what the fuck did I ever do to you?” Richie gasps,

using his free hand to clutch at his heart. He elbows Eddie in the ribs. "Eds, baby, defend my honour."

"What honour?" Eddie snarks, grinning.

Richie lets go of Eddie's hand in favour of falling to his knees on the ground dramatically, moaning and groaning his way to the floor.

"Et tu, Eddie Spaghetti?" Richie chokes, grabbing onto Eddie's legs as he goes down. Eddie swats him away with each attempt, rolling his eyes in a way that could only be described as *fond*. "Woe is me, Losers! My love hath forsaken me! And after I just gave him the best handy of his fuckin' *life*."

"Shut *up*, Richie," Eddie shouts, voice growing to its highest pitch on the last syllable as Richie jumps up from the floor in one fluid motion and scoops Eddie up into his arms. "Put me *down*, you fucking asshole!"

Richie raises his eyebrows at the other Losers, tongue caught cheekily between his teeth. "Put you down you ask, my love?" he says, following his words with large strides over to the water, Eddie grinning and yelling and struggling in his arms. "Well, if you insist, my little love muffin."

He promptly wades into the water until he's waist deep, and drops Eddie into it. All the Losers look on as the two of them begin to argue and shove at each other in the water.

"This doesn't seem all that different," Bev acknowledges. "That's definitely the sort of shit he'd have pulled on Eddie before, too."

"Pulling pigtails springs to mind," Stan deadpans.

"Oh, hang on," Mike says. "That part's kinda different."

He's right: never before have Richie and Eddie's arguments / wrestling matches ended with Eddie in Richie's arms, legs wrapped around his waist as they make out in a worryingly fiercely fashion.

"Th-that is new," Bill concurs.

“Should we – should we go?” Ben offers.

“Nah,” Bev disagrees , grabbing Ben and Mike’s hands and pulling them forward. “Yo, lovebirds – we playing shoulders wars, or what?”

“Oh, you are fucking *on*, Marsh. Hop the fuck on, Eds.”

“*You* hop the fuck on, Trashmouth.”

“Baby, I will literally drown you if I try to get on your shoulders, you adorably short piece of ass.”

“Who the *fuck* are you calling short, dipshit?”

Stan looks at the only person left on dry land with him; Bill.

“One day we’ll all be called in as witnesses,” Stan mutters. “Because those two bozos have killed each other.”

“M-maybe so,” Bill concedes. “But at l-least we won’t have to hear th-their fucking pining anymore.”

They fist bump as Eddie tries to drown Richie a few hundred yards ahead of them.

Author's Note:

As always, please send me Reddie prompts over on
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